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## RAMIFICATIONS OF BERIA PURGE

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Soviet propaganda coverage of Beria's purge is consistently echoing the speeches and other material from the 19th Party Congress and from the vigilance campaign which was underway at the time of the "doctors' plot". "Revolutionary vigilance" against "enemies cleverly masking themselves in the guise of communists" sent in by capitalist states or recruited from the "politically and morally rotten elements" of the Soviet population is demanded in front page editorials in the central and regional press.

The recurrence of this heavy propaganda coverage on the necessity for vigilance and the insistence that Beria was packing the police apparatus with his own followers preparatory to an attempt to establish a personal dictatorship in the USSR suggests that the "doctors' plot" and its accompanying propaganda for vigilance were directed against the developing power of the police. To prevent any other element, such as the army, from developing the same arbitrary ideas, the ruling hierarchy continually reminds the Soviet people that "the party is the leading force of Soviet society". Local party plenums, meetings of workers, and meetings of the ministries, including that of defense, have all reiterated their "support for the decisions of the Central Committee and its Presidium" and their unity with the party. High military officers who spoke at the meeting of defense personnel included Colonel General Zheltov, the USSR Minister of Defense Marshal Bulganin, Admiral Kuznetsov and Marshals Zhukov, Sokolovsky, Govorov, Budenny, and others. Marshal Vasilievsky, a First Deputy Minister of Defense was apparently absent.

Unity in leadership is also stressed. The principle of collectivity, which has received so much attention since Stalin's death, is set forth as a counter to "arbitrary party work." While Malenkov gained in power through Beria's purge, he apparently intends to continue operating behind the protective cloak of collegial unanimity - a maneuver reminiscent of Stalin in the 1920's.

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Beria is held up as an example to demonstrate the necessity for party control in all spheres of Soviet life. It is said that the entire apparatus of the Ministry of Internal Affairs "must be placed under party supervision."

The leaders are moving with rapidity to assure that this decision is effected, and men whom Beria had "insidiously" maneuvered into key positions are being ousted. In the Ukraine, T. A. Strokach, the MVD minister before Stalin's death has replaced P. Y. Meshik, the MVD minister who apparently was appointed by Beria on 4 March just prior to Stalin's death.

Georgia, where Beria's influence had been particularly strong, is clearly destined for another wide-spread shakeup. V. G. Dekanozov has already been ousted. Long an associate of Beria, he was made Georgian MVD minister and a member of the party buro in the April 1953 reorganization which reversed the purge carried out by Stalin in 1951-52. A Georgian Central Committee plenum has denounced six of Beria's other followers as "strangers to the party" who had been infiltrated into key positions throughout the MVD because of their personal loyalty to Beria.

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